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formal recognition that the bereaved lineage, freed from its death pollution, had been received back into the normal social life of the caste.

Lineage members were also united in worship of their lineage goddess or *dharma devi* ("goddess of moral law"). This goddess, named differently in different lineages, was a species of the common Nayar goddess Bhagavadi. Her idol was housed in a small shrine near the oldest ancestral house or sometimes in the courtyard of the village temple. She was believed capable of inflicting or withholding sickness and all types of misfortune. To ward them off, members propitiated her with offerings of cooked food every year. The astrologer might also advise an emergency propitiation. She had the power to bless women of the lineage with fertility. On this account she was worshipped before a tāli rite and also at the first menstruation ceremonies of a girl. In a somewhat vague sense, moreover, lineage members appear to have felt themselves collectively responsible to the goddess for sins or ritual lapses on the part of one of them. It was believed that if any member failed to observe the religious laws of caste, to perform household duties correctly, or to revere the goddess, she might bring sickness or misfortune upon the lineage as a whole.

In spite of this sense of collective moral responsibility, the evidence is unclear as to whether the lineage as a whole was held legally responsible for any of its member's acts. It is true that the enangar were the legal representatives of the local caste unit in its relations with the lineage. This inter-lineage relationship was hereditary and obligatory. It could not be entered into or permanently broken without the consent of the assembly and the chief of the district. If, moreover, an individual infringed a religious law of the caste, it was the duty of his lineage's enangar to summon a caste assembly to judge and punish the offense. Crimes, which were also sins, against caste law included incest within the lineage; dining or sex relations with prohibited lower-caste persons; failure to perform the marriage rite of a girl before she reached puberty; failure to observe pollution at the birth or death of a lineage member or (on the part of an individual woman) during menstruation; failure to pay dues in kind to the Nayar temple of the neighborhood. On being apprized of an offense, the assembly's first recourse was temporarily to ostracize the offender's household from the caste community. Ostracism meant that the offenders might not enter the temple, bathe in public bathing pools, enter the houses of other Nayars, employ the village servant

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castes, or receive customary help from their enangar at life-crisis ceremonies. If the ostracism was not effected it was believed that the whole neighborhood would fall into disfavor with the caste goddess and might become prey to epidemic or crop failure.

The point on which I am uncertain is whether the lineage as a whole was ostracized, or whether other branches of the lineage normally retained their caste status by severing their own connections with the offender's property group. The latter actually occurred in a case in Cochin in 1924. A Sudra Nayar woman had sex relations with a man of the caste of Nayar funeral priests. Shortly after the assembly met, the other houses of her lineage repudiated all connection with the offender's household, which alone remained ostracized for a year. The woman and her lover then fled to Malaya. The household paid its fine and was reaccepted to caste. I do not know whether it was possible under native rule for a lineage to repudiate its responsibilities in this way.

Minor offenses, such as dining with low-caste people, were settled by the offender's property group paying a fine to the village temple. The offender and his household were purified from their pollution by certain ritual acts. They then gave a feast to their enanger at which they were publicly reaccepted to caste. Traditionally, graver offenses (such as the one above) met harsher penalties. The caste's judgment on such an offense traditionally had to be ratified by the district chief or by a royal officer. The offender was then either executed by his immediate matrilineal kin or surrendered to the king for sale into slavery. His household members performed his funeral rites and only then were they taken back into caste.

Whether or not the lineage as a whole was held collectively responsible for offenses against the religious law of the caste, it was not held responsible for civil wrongs judged by the village headman or for crimes judged by the chief or by officers of the royal court. The property group, headed by its kāranavan, and not the whole lineage, was responsible in cases of theft, debt, or other offenses concerning property which were judged by the village headman. With regard to a major crime, a Nayar who murdered another was tried in the court of the king or of a higher chief. If the murdered man was of the same or a higher caste than the murderer, the murderer was executed by a small group of Nayars selected by the judge. If the murdered man was of lower caste, the murderer's property group had to pay a fine to the district chief. Again, if a Nayar of any rank committed treason

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kāranavan's death, his adopted successor was too young to manage the property. This passed temporarily into the management of a man from still another branch of the same lineage. When the true claimant came of age he disputed his guardian's management. After a bitter lawsuit the guardian was deposed in a British court. He continued to live on the *taravād*'s land and to harass his young successor. When the guardian died, the young *kāranavan* in his anger failed to arrange for the cremation rites until several days had passed and the corpse had decomposed. The ghost of this proxy *kāranavan* has harrassed his successors ever since, causing many of them to die of diabetes. The present members regard this condition as a decomposition of the body during life. The ghost's anger is so great that propitiations do not wholly avert its vengeance, although special offerings temporarily delay the progress of the disease.

The misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts include many forms of sickness, mental disorder, female barrenness and miscarriages, all of which are attributed to actual bodily possession by a ghost. Financial loss, crop failure and the deaths of babies or cows may also result from the ghosts' displeasure. I could find no very clear distinction between the misfortunes inflicted by lineage ghosts and those brought about by the patron goddess, by malevolent alien ghosts, or by the witchcraft or sorcery of enemies. Indeed it is obvious that the Nāyars themselves do not clearly restrict particular misfortunes to particular agents. For on the occasion of a misfortune, the *kāranavan* must often consult the village astrologer (Kanisan) who makes calculations to discover the responsible agent. He then instructs the *kāranavan* how to carry out its propitiation or to accomplish its control.

However, my information suggests that some misfortunes may be more likely to be attributed to some agents than to others. Miscarriages, for example, seem to be often attributed to ancestresses, to female alien ghosts, or to the patron goddess. Barrenness is often attributed to the snake gods of the *taravād*, who are believed to guard the fertility of its women. These misfortunes seem to be less often attributed to male ghosts, although some instances are known. Perhaps most important, however, circumstances immediately preceding the misfortune may help to determine the agent. If a forebear has died recently, or if a *taravād* has failed to propitiate its lineage ghosts or patron goddess, the *kāranavan* may not even trouble to consult the astrologer, or the astrologer may merely corroborate his suspicions. Similarly, if a man has an enemy with whom he has recently quarreled and then himself falls ill with fever, he is like to assume that the enemy has engaged the services of a witch or sorcerer against him. In small villages whose population is stable, moreover, the astrologer makes it his business to know the affairs of his clients and thus to diagnose appropriate causes for their misfortunes.

Sociological analysis. A satisfactory analysis of the functions of lineage ghosts must take into account those of other supernatural agents and of secular authorities. Among the Nāyars, supernatural agents have played only a minor role in punishing offences against men, as distinct from those against themselves. This is undoubtedly because human authorities of various kinds had strong judicial functions, deriving from their incorporation in a kingdom. In the last analysis their authority was backed by the military power of the king or chief. Among Nāyars, civil disputes were tried by village headman or district chief. Certain major crimes against the kingdom's religious laws were tried in the Raja's court. They included the killing of a cow or a Brahman or fornication with lower caste persons. The killing or assault of a Nāyar

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accumulating religious merit against the life to come. With regard to their interests in this world, the ancestors resemble their descendants.

Lineage ghosts are powerful beings who can help or harm the living. The effect which they exert on the fortunes of the living is much greater than that exerted by the living on their own. They can aid their descendants by preserving crops, cattle, houses, and children, but their punitive characteristics are those most emphasized. Offerings to ghosts are designed less toward seeking positive good than toward averting misfortune. There is no idealization of the ghosts as morally superior beings. They are human in their failings of envy and bad temper, and indeed, even more capricious than the living. They may punish wrongdoing with a degree of justice, but they do not look sympathetically into the hearts of propitiants, and are almost as likely to exact vengeance for accidental mistakes in the performance of rites as for wilful immorality. Nāyars do not attempt to enter intimate spiritual communion with them or to please them by inner suffering and renunciation. Rather, the ghosts are bought off with gifts of food in order that their envy may be appeased.

These attitudes to the ancestors[12] are, it seems, directly related to relationships with the senior generation among the living. A man's relationship with his mother's brother is, from childhood, one of stern discipline. All mother's brothers have authority over their nephews and in traditional households may inflict corporal punishment on adolescents. There is a marked lack of intimacy between senior and junior men within the *taravād*, and the sanction on a nephew's good conduct is fear of punishment rather than fear over loss of love. Good *kāranavans* are devoted to their juniors in a stern and dutiful manner. They are proud of their *taravād* as against the rest of the world, but they do not exhibit personal tenderness to their juniors. Power is vested in the senior generation; there is little feeling that a nephew could wield power over his uncle by withdrawing his emotional support. Great emphasis is placed on a formal etiquette of dignified and respectful behavior, amounting to partial avoidance, but neither party need feel that he loves the other in his heart. Nephews will not normally readily reveal hostility toward their uncles before outsiders, for they wish to preserve the dignity of the *taravād*. But they do publicly acknowledge hostility under provocation, and more frequently accuse the uncle of aggression toward themselves. That hostility is a normal component of relationships with mother's brothers is proverbial among Nāyars. They recognize this as the reason why a formal etiquette of behavior is indispensable. And even in spite of the stringent rules regulating the intercourse of mother's brother and sister's son, physical aggression between them may occur. In spite of the supernatural sanctions against violence within the lineage, I heard several stories of nephews who poisoned or stabbed their mothers' brothers. Aged *kāranavans* of large *taravāds* often complain of their loneliness. They may not behave intimately with their juniors and know in their hearts that they are hated and envied. "Indeed," as one Nāyar remarked, "in an old-fashioned *taravād* the position of the *kāranavan* is not safe." The office of *kāranavan* is, of course, much coveted. Junior men commonly number themselves off in order of age-rank as second, third, fourth men, etc., and with divided feelings await the demise of those above them which will raise them to higher rank. The relationship between older and younger brothers, own or classificatory, is only slightly less stern and formal than that between mother's brother and sister's son.

The relationship of a woman with her mother's brother is less harsh than that

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hoods are placed in the shrine, and no insect or rat or other animal is killed in the consecrated spot. Even broken bits of snake images are worshipped and they are set up in a row. No image or snake-stone is permitted to fall down, as that is considered to be inauspicious. On the inner surface of the hood of the snake is carved a seated female figure.

These sacred snakes are supposed to be different from the ordinary serpents. They are given the status of benign family deities and are presumed to possess strange powers and the attribute of gods. They are revered and they deign to live only under ceremonially pure conditions and surroundings, accepting only vegetarian offerings and abhorring animal sacrifice. In contrast mention may be made of the Thlen of the Khasis which demands human blood as offering. In the event however of their abode being polluted, e. g., by a menstruating woman, the serpents are angered, and unless propitiated may cause disease or harm to the offender. The sacred serpent called *sarpam* is supposed to be small, about 6 to 18 inches in length and is golden in colour. It is highly poisonous but ordinarily does not do any harm. If properly propitiated it guards the family and brings good luck and prosperity; but if neglected, insulted, or otherwise uncared for, it causes skin disease, leprosy or loss of sight. Such a punishment is visited on the offender or on his near relatives. As a consequence certain taboos are attached to the shrines and no menstruating or pregnant woman may come within six yards of the shrine, nor should anyone enter it without taking a bath.

The actual worship or *puja* is conducted either once or twice a year. The priest cooks rice in milk and adds pieces of ripe plantain to it, with a few flowering heads of the sacred *tulsi* plant dropped in towards the end. The offering is cooked on a special oven near the *sarpa kavu* in a bell-metal vessel. Thereafter, the priest pours some water over the snake idols to ceremonially bathe them and places a bunch of areca-nut palm in efflorescence on the head of the image in a diagonal fashion. The idol is then anointed with turmeric powder and basil leaves and flower petals are

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who is racially inferior, belong to *her* Taravâd. The children of the inferior mothers are never brought into the Taravâd of the superior fathers. That is, they are never brought into it to *belong* to it. But they may live there. And where they do so, they cannot enter the Taravâd kitchen or touch the women while they are eating. Nor are they allowed to touch their father's corpse. They may live in the Taravâd, under these and other disabilities, but they are never *of* it.

It will be as well to avoid here a possible error that may have arisen from the statement that most of the clans may intermingle. Those of the same clan name may marry. The Nâyars of North Malabar are held to be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the river Korapuzha, 7 miles north of Calicut; so that a woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a man of her own clan name of South Malabar. There will be more to say on the point when we come to "Marriage." A Nâyar woman of North Malabar cannot pass northward beyond the frontier; she cannot pass the hills to the eastward; and she cannot cross the Korapuzha to the south. It is tabu. To the west is the sea. The women of South Malabar are similarly confined by *custom*, breach of which involves forfeiture of caste. To this rule there is what appears to be an exception, and this exception is now having some slight effect, since of late years the world has come in touch with the Malayâli who now-a-days goes to the University, studies medicine and law in the Presidency town or even in far off England. It is that women of the relatively inferior Akattu Châma clan are not under quite the same restrictions as regards residence as are those of most of the other clans; so in these days of free communications when Malayâlis travel and frequently reside far from their own country, they often prefer to select wives from this Akatta Châma clan. This may have some effect on the status of the clan.

But the old order changeth everywhere, and now-a-days Malayâlis who are in the Government service and obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and taken with them their wives who are of clans other than the Akatta Châma. But this is more new fangled than orthodox. The interdiction to travel, and the possible exception to it in the case of the Akattu Châma women,

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has been explained to me in this way. The Nâyar woman observes pollution for three days during menstruation. While in her period she may not eat or drink with any other member of the Taravâd, and at the end of it, that is on the fourth day, she must be purified. Purification is known as "mâttu" (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman who, in some parts of South Malabar, is of the *Mannan* or Vannan caste (whose *métier* it is to wash for the Nâyars and Nambûtiris), but who is, as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tîyan caste, giving her, after her bath, *one of her own* clean cloths to wear (which is called mattu, change of raiment) instead of the soiled cloth which she takes away to wash. Pollution, which may come through a death in the family, through child birth, or menstruation *must* be removed by "mâttu." There is no avoiding it.* Until it is done, and it *must* be done on the fourth day, the woman is out of caste. It must be done in the right way at the right moment under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences. How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks vengeance on a Taravâd by preventing the right person giving "mâttu" to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal inflict deeper injury. Now the Nâyar woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach of "mâttu." My informant here tells me that the Vannan caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nâyar women cannot go where these are not to be found; and that "mâttu" must be done by one of that caste. But this is not the rule. I know from my own observation in the most truly conservative localities, in Kurumbranâd for instance, where the Nâyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a rule a Tîyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction has other roots than those involved in "mâttu." It does not account for the superstition against crossing water which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. As bearing on this point I may mention that the Nâyar women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the river-backwater and come into the town.

The Zamorin is the over-lord of the Akattu Châma clan, and with the decline of his power and influence, it may be that the women of it have latterly taken more liberty than was formerly possible.

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* More will be said on this point when we come to describe the Tîyans.

582 was made on page 83, where it was said that a woman
564 of any clan of North Malabar may not consort with a
184 man of the same clan name belonging to South Malabar. Following this principle, the man may do so. A woman of South Malabar (inferior), mating with a man of her own clan name of North Malabar (superior), would be following anulômam; but a woman of North Malabar cannot, under pain of being guilty of pratilômam, mate with a man of her own clan name of South Malabar.
564 Alliances between the people of North Malabar and
484 South Malabar seem to be extremely rare; partly, per-
784 haps, because of this custom which is all compulsive, partly because the Nâyar women of North Malabar
[628] cannot cross the river which marks the boundary between the two. Nor, as said before, can the Nâyar women of Chirakkal, the northern-most portion of Malabar, cross the river which lies between it and South Canara to the northward. Thus, they cannot go beyond their northern or southern boundaries. The origin of this interdiction to cross the river southwards has been explained to me as emanating from a command of the Kólattiri Rajah in days gone by, when, the Arabs having come to the country about Calicut (South Malabar), there was a chance of the women being seized and taken as wives. An explanation which is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to have originated in much the same way, but I have not
564 noted precisely what it is. Again, men of the Kurup clan of Katattanâd may mate with women of the
582 Nambiyâr clan who live in Kôttayam, but they may not mate with women of the Nambiyâr clan living in Chirakkal. The custom imputing superiority or inferiority to those of a clan inhabiting a certain locality is obscure; it has its counterpart elsewhere in Malabar.

"Except the Nambûtiri, the Nâyar has no other
793 priestly, spiritual or religious instructor; and it is for the
564 gratification of this Bhû-dévan (earth god) that the Sûdra woman, if she has any religious instruction at all, is taught that she was created." We have heard what Hamilton has said about this (see Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I). Though the first portion of this statement is not quite accurate, for we have seen that the priests and religious instructors of the Nâyars are not admitted to be, strictly speaking, Nambûtiris, yet on the whole it is not far wrong, as the Nambûtiri is esteemed as a very exalted person, and he may ply his music among the Nâyar ladies without very much restriction. As remarked before, the

765 of boundaries. With the observance of the Pinda Atiyantaram or feast of pindams, there is involved the Dîkṣha, or leaving the entire body unshaved for 41 days, or for a year. There is no variable limit between 41 days [184] or a year. Forty-one days is permissible as the period for the Dîkṣha, but a year is correct. The 41-day period is the rule in North Malabar.

[593] I have seen many who were under the Dîkṣha for a year. He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew 604 of the deceased. One member only of the Taravâd bears [302] the mark of mourning by his growth of hair, remarkable enough in Malabar where every one as a rule, excepting the Mâppila Muhammadans (and they shave their heads), shaves his face, head (except the patch on the crown) chest and arms, or at any rate his wrists. He who is under the Dîkṣha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly seeds to the spirit of the deceased every morning after [784] his bath; and he is under restriction from women, from alchoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also tobacco. When the Dîkṣha is observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after death. When it is carried on for a year there is observed every month a ceremony called * Bali. It is noteworthy [821] that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of the Dîkṣha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and [805] sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning day on which the star presides.

793 For the * Bali, a man of the Elâyatu caste officiates. 564 It has been said already ("Nambûtiri Brâhmans": 765 Bulletin, Vol. III, No. I), that the Elâyatus are priests for the Nâyars. They wear the Brâhman's thread, but they are not Brâhmans. They are not permitted to study the Vêdas, but to the Nâyars they stand in the place of the ordinary Purôhit. The officiating Elâyatu prepares the rice for the Vêli when the deceased, represented by Karuka grass, is offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds and some other things. The Elâyatu should be paid a rupee for his services, which are considered necessary even when the man under Dîkṣha himself is familiar with the required ceremonial.

765 The last day of the Dîkṣha is one of festivity. After 600 the * Bali the man under Dîkṣha is shaved. All this over

* Or Bali.

776 high above his reach unless, of course, there is something near by on which he could climb. He cannot untie a knot, as he does not possess fingers, though he can open the strongest lock. What rich people do to keep their money out of his reach is to tie a knot on the purse and keep it locked in a safe, the latter precaution being necessary against human hands that possess fingers.

776 791 773 *Kutti Chattan* can, of course, be tamed by magicians and bribed to do whatever his patrons like. There is a story that a Brahmin landlord who was also a magician tamed a *Kutti Chattan* and used him for the purpose of keeping a watch on his things. A Christian tenant of his who had gone to pay the rent, not knowing the existence of the invisible and mysterious detective, stole certain things and took them home with him. But lo! *Kutti Chattan* had followed him, and the man was found dead next morning, and the stolen things were in their place. Such is the power of *Kutti Chattan*, the household elf of Malabar.

771 Whether the practices here narrated and the belief in the existence of a "naughty elf" amount to religion depends very much upon the definition we give to it. Though they are distinctly social and possess social sanction, I do not think it can be called religion, because there is a fundamental difference in the emotional and psychic aspects of religious experience and practice, and such social beliefs and customs as I have described here.

754 771 [178] [789] But side by side with this there also exists "black magic," sinister, selfish, and anti-social. It is fast disappearing, more as a result of economic pressure than because of any growing disbelief in it. A young man has no time now to devote himself entirely to sacrificing goats and birds all night and chanting formulæ so that he might become possessed of magical power. Those young men who have devoted themselves to such practices are, however, looked upon with great fear. The community does not like such practices, and though these magicians may excite fear, they are also aware of the general belief that they will some day come to a disastrous end.

Their practices are carried on in secret and nobody knows what they do except those initiated. Their assistance is procured only by people who want to do harm to others or satisfy ignoble desires. A man often gets the help of a magician of this sort to perfôrm his "art" so that an enemy of his who is gone on a pilgrimage may not return. They are avoided by all decent people, and society in general, though it fears their "art," considers them charlatans.

754 There are many minor superstitions that can be only briefly noticed here.

784 123 [755] *The Evil Eye.*—The magical effect of the evil eye is a matter of very serious concern among Nāyar women. I remember being taken to task for telling a woman how healthy her boy looked, and must add that I felt as if I had been convicted of a heinous crime when four or five days later I was told that the child was ill. The entire feminine opinion of the village was convinced that the child was suffering from my evil eye, and a good many *mantrams*, or magical formulæ, were said over it before the child was well again.

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the child was well again. With this idea of evil eye is bound up what is known as *Kari-Nakku*, or black-tongue. When a man with *Kari-Nakku* utters anything it has effect at once. When the evil eye and *Kari-Nakku* are combined, then it has "much *orenda*" as an Angotkin would say. If your newly built house is looked upon with an evil eye and some good expression used by such a man about it, a lightning might set fire to it and destroy it the same night. If your mango tree is full of fruit this year and a man with an evil eye and *Kari-Nakku* looks at it and says "how fortunate," it might happen that for years to come it would bear no more fruit. If an envious woman, aroused by the green-eyed monster of jealousy, remarks how pretty a girl is, her hair might begin to fall off, her colour might fade, her cheeks might lose their bloom.

The fact to notice with regard to this is that you have to say complimentary things to effect evil. If you said how ugly a pretty girl is it would not affect her. You must say, out of your heart, how beautiful she is and then it might have effect. Everything is supposed to depend on whether it is said with or without design. If anything is said with design there would be no effect. Only when such exclamation comes out of the heart has it the power to do evil.

Koti.—Another evil-working power is *Koti*. The word literally means desire, but as an evil force it works only when a hungry person sees a rich and healthy fellow eating a good meal. If a poor man sees you eat, and his mouth waters at the delicacies before you, you are sure to suffer from his *Koti*, you will get stomach-ache and even dysentery. It is the particular look of the hungry man that has the evil effect. When once a man begins to suffer from another's *Koti* the only way to get over it is to eat some salt over which some *mantrams*, or magical formulæ, have been repeated.

The tabus which are prevalent among the Nāyars are too many to be described in detail here. A few examples will show how, even in the most important matters, life is regulated in primitive society. The reason for such prohibitions, as M. Reinach points out, is to live at peace with the spirits that are supposed to surround you.

You are prohibited from eating your food at dusk. It is supposed to be an awful sin, because everything is considered to be in "a state of suspended animation" in the very short period which marks the transition from a hot tropical day to a cool and breezy night. You cannot do anything at that time except bathe or pray. There are tabus on what you may do on particular days of the week :

> "*Ezuzcha Kulichalum*
> *Vyāzcha Kulikkaruta.*"

This is a typical example of the Nāyar tabu. Its meaning is this : "Even if you have an oilbath on the seven days of the week, don't do it on a Thursday." Though there is no reason assigned for such a prohibition, there is a sufficiency of

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rhyme, and I must say that I never knew anyone who took an oil bath on a Thursday, except people who take it every day.

The tabus extend to the way in which you sleep. You are not supposed to sleep with your body north to south or west to east. The reason, I believe, is that the spirits of the dead are supposed to live in the south and in the east, and if you lie with your head facing them you might become possessed of them.

There are certain days of the lunar month on which no one may start on a journey :

Yama Rudrāhi Muppūram
Trikella iva ēzhu Naal
Vilakkil vilayā Bhūmi
Pōkunnakil avan vari.

On the seven days presided over by the seven stars thus enumerated, if a land is sowed no seed will sprout, if anyone starts on a journey he will not return.

I remember a curious story connected with this. Some four months before leaving for England I had to see the Inspector of Schools in Travancore to get my Leaving Certificate. The only day available for me was one of these tabu days, and in spite of the protests of everybody else in the house, I set out on my business. When I reached the capital of the state the Inspector of Schools had left on circuit an hour before to the place where I started from. I followed him there, but when I arrived he had left the place, and, as a result of continuous journeying and bad food, I was laid up in bed through a physical breakdown. It was true that if I had not started on that tabu day, but had had the patience to wait for another twenty-four hours the Inspector of Schools would have come to the town where I was living ; it was also true that I came back very ill. Everyone, therefore, took it for granted that all this ill-luck was due to my starting on a bad day. Many are the stories that are told of people suffering great misfortunes due to starting on these bad days, and there is, as M. Reinach would say, " a vast oral tradition of leading cases " connected with it. I daresay my case will go down as a most authentic one, as the facts are undoubtedly true ; only the explanation is doubtful.

Tabus like this can be mentioned without end ; but it is useless to do so, as they all seem to have the same " rationale " : that is, you will break your peace with the world of demons and ghosts that surround you and bring down upon yourself their wrath if you break any one of these rules. Tabu among the Nāyars is essentially an arrangement to keep the ghosts and spirits pacified : for it is clear to them from the tested experience of past ages that to break any of these rules is to challenge those who have power to do them great harm

In whatever is said here, it should be understood that I have tried to eliminate from the Nāyar beliefs those elements which are indubitably Hindu. As I have pointed out at the start, there are a good many devout Hindus among the Nāyars, but it is an interesting fact that the practices and beliefs above described are pre-

is from the Sanskrit work *Nayaka*, meaning leader. As such a derivation flatters the national vanity of the community it has been accepted without question. The utter absurdity of the idea that the people who call themselves Aryans (as the Brahmins of Malabar still do) and look down upon the rest from a point of view of racial superiority, can have given them this proud title, never seems to have suggested itself. Moreover, the Aryan settlers of Malabar asserted a spiritual as well as temporal superiority over the Nāyars, which goes far to disprove the theory of the derivation of the word from *Nayaka*, or Lord.

It seems unquestionable, on the other hand, that the word *Nāyar* is the same as *Nagar*. As the totem names seem to have been imposed on the community from outside it seems reasonable to suppose that this serpent-worshipping people were called by their neighbours *Nagar* or serpent-men. That the Nāyars in ancient days were a totemic clan, is easy to see from the fact that every Nāyar family still holds the serpent sacred. Thus it will not cut down a *Kavu*, or serpent grove, as it is the place where the family serpents reside. It is, of course, natural that in a community of 3½ million souls the same solidarity of totemic feeling, as it exists, say, among the turtle clan, cannot have existed.

M. S. Reinach, in defining totemism as distinct from fetishism, says that the totem is a class of objects regarded by a tribe or clan as tutelary or protective in the widest sense of the word. Take the case of a clan with a serpent totem; the members will call themselves serpents, claim descent from a serpent, abstain from killing serpents, etc. Not only do the Nāyars still show traces of having done all this, but they continue to perform with undiminished zeal *Nagathān* (*thān* is an honorific suffix) *pattus*, or prayers and songs, to the sacred serpents. When anything goes wrong the astrologer generally finds something done to offend the sacred serpents. There is one singular case where a man, without heeding the warnings of all his people, went and cleared a serpent grove, and the result was that he died six days later. In popular opinion, this was without doubt due to the wrath of the serpents.

From all this it seems quite clear that before the Aryan invasion the Nāyars were a community with a *Naga* or serpent totem. This is supported by evidence from Ceylon also. Ceylon chronicles mention that when the Buddha visited the island for the second time (second century B.C.) he found the northern part peopled by Nagas who were fighting with the Yakshas, or the original inhabitants of the land.[1] This is without doubt an emigration of S. Indian people to Ceylon, probably as a result of Aryan pressure from the North. The descendants of these Nagas of Ceylon, it must be noticed, bear a close similarity to the Nāyars in matters of social life. Among their customs may be specially noticed: (*a*) the elasticity or rather the slenderness of the marriage tie which permits the discarding, without any disgrace attached to it, of undesirable husbands or wives; (*b*) the remarriage of such widows

[1] See Parker, *Ancient Ceylon*. London, 1909, p. 16.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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disengaged as quickly whenever he drops his 'musquet' in the wood or slings it across his shoulders for the purpose of rushing to close encounter with this terrible instrument." [1]

Cavalry was unknown; there was only infantry. The soldiers wore a silk cloth wound round the head and carried swords, shields, lances and bows. The king had an umbrella formed of the leaves of a tree and fixed on to the end of a cane, for protection from the sun. There was no standard. When they were in battle, and one army was at a distance from the other, two ranges of a cross-bow, the king would ask the Brahmans to go to the camp of the enemy and tell the knights to let one hundred of his men fight with the same number on his side, when both the parties would go to the central space to do so. The fighting continued even for three days, when blows were given on the head and at the legs. After the death of some men on either side, the survivors were directed to return to their camps. If any more fighting was desired, the same course was adopted. Sometimes the king rode on an elephant, and sometimes the Nayars carried him. The pay of a soldier was four carlini a month, and in time of war half a ducat.

The Nayars whom the king received in his service were never dismissed, however old they might be. They received their pay and rations, and the king granted favours to whosoever had served him well. If, however, they were left unpaid for some years, some four or five hundred of the aggrieved would rise up and go in a body to the palace, and send word to the king that they would go away dismissed, because he did not give them food. The king would then beg them to have patience, pay them at once either the whole amount due to them or a part of it with a promise to pay the balance at an early date. The king generally satisfied them, considering it a disgrace that they should go away to serve under another ruler. Even in times of war they were not at liberty to touch any peasant, or eat and drink with him in his house without penalty. The king was bound to support the mother and family of any soldier who died in war. He also treated, at his own expense, any soldier who was wounded in battle. [2]

1. Abbe Dubois People of India.
2. A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar, page 130-131, Duarte Barbosa.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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554 Malabar, where it is a creation of the Zamorin.

7. *Asán.*—The word means a teacher. He is also a head-man (*Karayinmél Asán*), who has certain social functions in connection with the marriage and other ceremonies.

8. *Achan.*—The word means father. It is the title of the Palghat Rajas, the ministers of the Calicut and Cochin Rajas (Mángát Achan and Páliyat Achan), and also of several other old Nayar chiefs.

9. *Manndtiyar.*—This is the title of certain aristocratic families in the Chittur Taluk near Palghat. The word is derived from *man*, earth, and *nétiyavar*, earners.

564 582 833 783 Marriage prohibitions. Among the high caste Sudras marriage is hypergamous, while the low caste Sudras are endogamous. This is the general rule, though exceptions may sometimes be found. A Nayar is allowed to cohabit with a woman lower in the social scale than himself, but his womenkind are prohibited from exercising the same liberty. This is called the *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam*. Dr. Gundert derives *Anulomam* from *Anu* with *lómam rómam* the hair, going with the hair or grain. So *Prathilómam* means going against the hair or grain. According to this usage, a Nayar woman, consorting with a man of the higher caste, follows the hair, purifies the blood, raises the progeny in social estimation. By cohabitation with a man of lower subdivision, clan or caste, she is guilty of *Prathilómam*; and if the difference of caste were admittedly great, she would be turned out of her family to prevent the whole family being boycotted. [1]

564 582 783 The rule of *Anulómam* and *Prathilómam* is everywhere observed with great strictness. In many cases, Nambuthiris, Embráns, Póttis and Tamil Brahmans, Kshatriyas and

1. Alliances between the people of North Malabar and South Malabar seem to be extremely rare. It is partly because of the principle of Prathilomam and perhaps partly that the Nayar women cannot cross the Korapuzha which marks the boundary between the two. Nor can the women of the extreme north of North Malabar cross the river between it and South Canara. The reason is said to be that the Kolatheri Raja so commanded owing to the fear that was entertained about their being captured and taken as wives by the Arabs. Similarly, till about fifty years ago the Nayar women from North Travancore and Cochin were prohibited from going beyond Quilon southward. These customs are being overlooked by the educated members of the community and it may almost be said that the custom has begun to die out.

[784] [562] [484] Further, in the extreme south of South Malabar a high caste bride mates with a low caste bridegroom on the Prathilomam already explained. The husband cannot touch her without pollution, when she is engaged in taking meals. In the case of Nambuthiris, the same custom is in force and they cannot be seen, while engaged in religious ceremonies or taking meals. With the spread of education, official status, wealth, power, and influence, many of these time-honoured customs are fast disappearing.

[P. 22]

CHAPTER II.

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THE SUDRAS OF COCHIN.

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A. THE HIGH CASTE SUDRAS (NAYARS)

(Continued).

582 According to Nayar ideas the most desirable bride for a young man is the daughter of his maternal uncle.

588 585 Marriage customs. There are two forms of marriage in vogue among the Nayars, namely, the *Thdlikettu kalyánam* (*tdli* tying ceremony), and the *Sambandham* (the customary nuptial union of man and woman), the first of which is performed for every girl before puberty, and the second, the real adult marriage, is celebrated after she comes of age. The *táli* tying for every girl is compulsory before she arrives at maturity, [1] and the omission or neglect of it will place her and her family under a ban; for, it is considered a religious impurity for a girl to attain puberty before the performance of this ceremony. There is however a tendency for these restrictions to be overlooked now-a-days.

[688] [82]

588 In every *taravád* or family, the ceremony is performed once in ten or twelve years, and all the girls down to the baby in the cradle, who have not already undergone this ceremony, are married in this fashion for the sake of economy. When, in a family, the *táli* tying ceremony has to be performed for a girl or a number of girls, the *káranavan* or senior member thereof, at a meeting of the friends and relatives of the family, sends for the local astrologer, who after examining the horoscope or horoscopes of the girl or girls determines the auspicious hour for it as well as for certain subsidiary rites

[787]

[784]

1. As a rule, the tali tying ceremony is performed before the girl attains puberty, but sometimes it is performed afterwards. In the latter case, the girl is prohibited from entering temples during the period intervening between the attainment of puberty and the tali tying ceremony.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll

105 563 1795 There is a small community of Jews in Cochin, divided into White, Brown, and Black, the last named being the most numerous. Other Kerala residents are foreigners such as Canarese, Tamils, Arabs, and Europeans.

105 564 1783 Untouchability has been made a penal offence by the present Indian Constitution and there is undoubtedly a tendency among the more enlightened in the country to combat its evils and attempt to eradicate it from modern Hindu society. On the other hand, the religious minded (and there are many) maintain that since the Constitution is a secular one and allows full freedom of religious belief and practice, the legislator cannot interfere in questions of caste and untouchability, as these have to do with the religious law and structure of India. The fact is that, today, untouchability is not what it was, but it cannot be said either that it has been done away with altogether. A visitor to Kerala is certainly immediately made aware of this, as many traditional views on what constitutes intercaste pollution and what does not are still very much in evidence. Thus, although a member of the artisan caste, a 184 264 Kammalan, perhaps no longer pollutes those above him in the hierarchy, atmospherically, at twenty four feet as he used to do, it is nevertheless unthinkable that he should sit down to a meal of cooked rice with a 463 484 Nambudri, or even for that matter with a Nayar. The aboriginal Nayadis who still live off begging and hunting may possibly "come into town" now and not have to keep off the roads for fear of polluting other 184 castes merely by being seen within a distance of seventy four feet, but they are not for that admitted to a would-be reformed Indian community in which no distinctions of caste, creed and colour are made any longer; in fact, they themselves, probably out of some sort of perverse attachment to their powers of polluting, refuse to be rehabilitated – as has been attempted by the former government of Travancore – and prefer to carry on with their traditional way of life.

It can thus be safely said that pollution of the higher castes by the lower is very much believed in and guarded against, even in Kerala 841 846 today. Menstruating women, and also those who have given birth, are still considered to be unclean for a period, varying with the people to whom they belong. And the various kin groups, of which every indiv- 614 idual is a member among the Hindus of Kerala, will equally be con- 846 sidered unclean and polluting for a certain amount of days – diminishing 765 in number in inverse proportion to the height of the caste – after a birth or a death has taken place.

000 Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected par-

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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afterwards to remove pollution. The children in the marumakkatayam family belong, of course, to their mother's family, clan, and caste. They are Nāyars, not Nambūtiris. The Nāyars of North Malabar are held to be superior all along the line, clan for clan, to those of South Malabar, which is divided from the north by the river Korapuzha, seven miles north of Calicut, so that a woman of North Malabar would not unite herself to a man of her own clan name of South Malabar. A Nāyar woman of North Malabar cannot pass northward beyond the frontier; she cannot pass the hills to the eastward; and she cannot cross the Korapuzha to the south. It is tabu. The women of South Malabar are similarly confined by custom, breach of which involves forfeiture of caste. To this rule there is an exception, and of late years the world has come in touch with the Malayāli, who nowadays goes to the University, studies medicine and law in the Presidency town (Madras), or even in far off England. Women of the relatively inferior Akattu Charna clan are not under quite the same restrictions as regards residence as are those of most of the other clans; so, in these days of free communications, when Malayālis travel, and frequently reside far from their own country, they often prefer to select wives from this Akattu Charna clan. But the old order changeth everywhere, and nowadays Malayālis who are in the Government service, and obliged to reside far away from Malabar, and a few who have taken up their abode in the Presidency town, have wrenched themselves free of the bonds of custom, and taken with them their wives who are of clans other than the Akattu Charna. The interdiction to travel, and the possible exception to it in the case of Akattu Charna women, has been explained to me in this way. The Nāyar woman observes pollution for three days during

564 484 841 783 [613]

menstruation. While in her period, she may not eat or drink with any other member of the taravād, and on the fourth day she must be purified. Purification is known as māttu (change), and it is effected by the washerwoman, who, in some parts of South Malabar, is of the Mannān or Vannān caste, whose *métier* is to wash for the Nāyars and Nambūtiris, but who is, as a rule, the washerwoman of the Tīyan caste, giving her, after her bath, one of her own cloths to wear (māttu, change of raiment) instead of the soiled cloth, which she takes away to wash. Pollution, which may come through a death in the family, through child-birth, or menstruation, must be removed by māttu. Until it is done, the woman is out of caste. It must be done in the right way at the right moment, under pain of the most unpleasant social consequences. [689] [613] How that the influential rural local magnate wreaks vengeance on a taravād by preventing the right person giving māttu to the women is well known in Malabar. He could not, with all the sections of the Penal Code at his disposal, inflict greater injury. Now the Nāyar woman is said to feel compelled to remain in Malabar, or within her own part of it, in order to be within reach of māttu. My informant tells me that, the Vannān caste being peculiar to Malabar, the Nāyar women cannot go where these are not to be found, and that māttu must be done by one of that caste. But I know, from my own observation in the most truly conservative localities, in Kurumbranād for example, where the Nāyar has a relative superiority, that the washerman is as a rule a Tīyan; and I cannot but think that the interdiction has other roots than those involved in māttu. It does not account for the superstition against crossing water, which has its counterparts elsewhere in the world. The origin of the interdiction to cross the river southwards

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13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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has been explained to me as emanating from a command of the Kōlatirri Rājah in days gone by, when, the Arabs having come to the country about Calicut, there was a chance of the women being seized and taken as wives. The explanation is somewhat fanciful. The prohibition to cross the river to the northwards is supposed to have originated in much the same way. As bearing on this point, I may mention that the Nāyar women living to the east of Calicut cannot cross the river backwater, and come into the town." It may be noted in this connection that the Paikāra river on the Nīlgiri hills is sacred to the Todas, and, for fear of mishap from arousing the wrath of the river-god, a pregnant Toda woman will not venture to cross it. No Toda will use the river water for any purpose, and they do not touch it, unless they have to ford it. They then walk through it, and, on reaching the opposite bank, bow their heads. Even when they walk over the Paikāra bridge, they take their hands out of the putkuli (body-cloth) as a mark of respect.

The complexity of the sub-divisions among the Nāyars in North Malabar is made manifest by the following account thereof in the Gazetteer of Malabar. "There are exogamous sub-divisions (perhaps corresponding to original tarwāds) called kulams, and these are grouped to form the sub-castes which are usually endogamous. It is quite impossible to attempt a complete account of the scheme, but to give some idea of its nature one example may be taken, and dealt with in some detail; and for this purpose the portion of Kurumbranād known as Payyanād will serve. This is the country between the Kōttapuzha and Pōrapuzha rivers, and is said to have been given by a Rāja of Kurumbranād to a certain Ambādi Kōvilagam Tamburātti (the stānam or title of the senior lady of the Zāmorin Rāja's family). In

no need to continue the annual ceremony for that person. 764 613
This is called ashtagaya srādh. It puts an end to the [769]
need for all earthly ceremonial. It is believed that the [775]
collection and careful disposal of the ashes of the dead [787]
gives peace to his spirit, and, what is more important,
the pacified spirit will not thereafter injure the living
members of the taravād, cause miscarriage to the women,
possess the men (as with an evil spirit), and so on. On 764
the fifteenth day after death is the purificatory ceremony. 613
Until this has been done, any one touched by any 783
member of the taravād should bathe before he enters
his house, or partakes of any food. A man of the [564]
Athikurisi clan officiates. He sprinkles milk oil, in
which some gingelly seeds have been put, over the
persons of those under pollution. This sprinkling, and
the bath which follows it, remove the death pollution.
The purifier receives a fixed remuneration for his offices [465]
on this occasion, as well as when there is a birth in the
taravād. In the case of death of a senior member of a 766
taravād, well-to-do and recognised as of some importance, 613
there is the feast called pinda atiyantaram on the 765
sixteenth day after death, given to the neighbours and 302
friends. With the observance of this feast of pindams
there is involved the dīksha, or leaving the entire body
unshaved for forty-one days, or for a year. There is no
variable limit between forty-one days or a year. The [184]
forty-one-day period is the rule in North Malabar. I
have seen many who were under the dīksha for a year.
He who lets his hair grow may be a son or nephew of
the deceased. One member only of the taravād bears 766
the mark of mourning by his growth of hair. He who 765
is under the dīksha offers half-boiled rice and gingelly 613
seeds to the spirits of the deceased every morning after [782]
his bath, and he is under restriction from women, from [784] [834]

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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alcoholic drinks, and from chewing betel, also from tobacco. When the dīksha is observed, the ashes of the dead are not deposited as described already (in the sun-dried vessel) until its last day—the forty-first or a year after death. When it is carried on for a year, there is observed every month a ceremony called bali. It is noteworthy that, in this monthly ceremony and for the conclusion of the dīksha, it is not the thirtieth or three hundred and sixty-fifth day which marks the date for the ceremonies, but it is the day (of the month) of the star which was presiding when the deceased met his death: the returning day on which the star presides.* For the bali, a man of the Elayatu caste officiates. The Elayatus are priests for the Nāyars. They wear the Brāhmin's thread, but they are not Brāhmins. They are not permitted to study the Vēdas, but to the Nāyars they stand in the place of the ordinary purōhit. The officiating Elayatu prepares the rice for the bali, when to the deceased, represented by karuka grass, are offered boiled rice, curds, gingelly seeds, and some other things. The Elayatu should be paid a rupee for his services, which are considered necessary even when the man under dīksha is himself familiar with the required ceremonial. The last day of the dīksha is one of festivity. After the bali, the man under dīksha is shaved. All this over, the only thing to be done for the deceased is the annual srādh or yearly funeral commemorative rite. Rice-balls are made, and given to crows. Clapping of hands announces to these birds that the rice is being thrown for them, and, should they not come at once and eat, it is evident that the spirit is displeased, and the taravād had better look out. The spirits of those who

* All caste Hindus who perform the srādh ceremonies calculate the day of death, not by the day of the month, but by the thithis (day after full or new moon).